

## **Dashmesh Academy, Inc., USA**

2/6/2015

Dr. Thomas Adams, Executive Director  
Instructional Quality Commission  
430 N Street, Room 3207  
Sacramento, CA 95614

Dear Dr. Adams,

### **Re: Draft History Social Curriculum Framework Review 2014-15**

My name is Ram Singh and I have been a community activist for the last 20 years. I have a background in Engineering and hold California credentials in Math. Currently, I am serving as the Director of Dashmesh Academy, a nonprofit organization involved in educational issues including curriculum, tutoring, coaching and after school programs. We have been conducting SAT and math training classes in for students in the Fremont, Union City area for many years.

We had earlier participated in the drafting of this curriculum framework and we congratulate you on the job well done. We have reviewed your draft curriculum and our feedback from as the members of the Sikh Community is attached herewith.

Sincerely,

  
Ram Singh, Director

408-667-3116

*A nonprofit Educational organization*

**1245 Olympic Drive, Milpitas, CA 95035**

## **The Civilizations of Islam**

Chapter 4. grade 7, Lines 1275-78, page 192

Draft framework that reads as follows,

Muslim civilization became notably cosmopolitan, as merchants and scholars founded new communities and won converts from sub-Saharan Africa and east to the Indian subcontinent to Southeast Asia and east to the Indian subcontinent to Southeast Asia. Conversion slowed in India with the emergence of Sikhism in 1469.

### **Comments:**

We concur with the above characterization. Guru Nanak was an apostle of 'universal brotherhood' and he condemned 'caste and class'. Sikhism began as a peaceful religion, and tolerance always remained one of the fundamental tenets. However, after the martyrdom of their fifth and ninth Gurus the Sikhs were determined to defend themselves against persecution by Mughal rulers. On the request of Kashmiri Pandits (Hindus), Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Sikh Guru saved the whole Hindu community from conversion to Muslim religion by sacrificing his own life. He is called 'Hind di Chadar (Saviour of Hindu Religion).'

Religious persecution led to the development of martial ethos that was enshrined by Guru Gobind Singh. Although the Sikh warrior tradition had started with the Sixth Guru, Hargobind, Guru Gobind Singh gave the Sikhs the organization and the discipline to succeed as saint-warriors. Since the time of the creation of Khalsa in 1699, all men were to adopt the name Singh, meaning lion, and to carry arms. "Sikhs formed the vanguard of resistance against the Mughal Empire from the 18th century onwards." according to W. H. McLeod.

The invincible spirit instilled into his Khalsa by the Guru, triumphed in the end. Banda Singh Bahadur was the first Sikh general to conquer Sirhind in Punjab and neighboring areas north of Delhi in 1710. He was the first ruler to establish Sikh rule in Punjab. Thus the rise of the Sikh warrior class resulted in slowing down the conversion.

### **References:**

J. S. Grewal, Guru Nanak in History, Punjab University, Chandigarh, 1979, 168-169  
Harbans Singh "The encyclopedia of Sikhism.

## **Historical Developments of the Reformation**

Chap 4, Grade 7, lines 1690-96, page 210-11

Draft framework that reads as follows,

Religious enthusiasm and challenge to orthodoxy in the early modern period was not unique to Europe. In South Asia, Sikhism arose as a new religion founded by Guru Nanak, a social reformer who challenged the authority of the Brahmin and the power of the Mughal empire. Students may learn about the Sikh Scripture (Guru Granth Sahib),

Nanak, a social reformer who challenged the authority of the Brahmin and the power of the Mughal empire. Students may learn about the Sikh Scripture (Guru Granth Sahib), articles of faith, turban, and Sikh history. The three basic principles of Sikhism are honest living, sharing with the needy, and praying to the same and one God.

### **Comments:**

We strongly support your well researched and outline about the origins of Sikh religion. Guru Nanak is generally depicted as a great social reformer. It is believed that he preached liberal social doctrines; he upheld the ideal of equality and advocated classless society. He was apostle of 'universal brotherhood' and he condemned 'caste and class'. A notable aspect of the 'social improvement' effected by him was the emancipation of women in this country. For him, men and women were equal not only before God but also before one another. There is no doubt that Sikh Gurus adopted the singing of devotional songs in praise of lord from Bhakti but there is a huge difference between Bhakti, Sufiism and Sikhism. Sikhism lays emphasis on the equality of men and women, good work ethics and as well as leading a good virtuous married life, which is Maya according to many Bhakti and Sufi saints.

Guru Nanak believed the there is One and the Only God, the Lord of Universes who was at once transcendent and immanent. No deity is to be worshipped. Although immanent in his Creation He was yet apart from it, being its Creator. Since He is real in the world that He had created, the world could not be considered unreal or illusionary (maya). It was real and sacred ("the abode of the True One"). It is therefore blasphemous to renounce it in quest of God. "He that is immanent in the Universe resides also within you. Seek, and ye shall find" (GG, 695). Renunciation of the world as a spiritual pursuit thus stood totally rejected. Celibacy was no longer countenanced, either. Full participation in life in a spirit of 'detachment' was prescribed instead. "Of all the religious rules and observances the house holder's life (grihasthya) is supreme. It is from here that all else is blessed"

### **Survey of World Religions**

Chap 5, Grade 9, 324-326, page 276

Draft framework that reads as follows,

Sikhism – Articles of faith, wearing of the turban, Guru Nanak Dev, strict monotheism, brotherhood and equality of humanity, rejection of idol worship and the caste system, the Sri Guru Granth, and the Dasam Granth...

### **Comments:**

Include definitions of a Sikh and Khalsa Sikh, initiation ceremony, saint-soldier concept, articles of faith, wearing of turban and Sikh history. strict monotheism, brotherhood and equality of humanity, rejection of idol worship and the caste system, Guru Nanak Dev and ten masters, Sikh scriptures (Sri Guru Granth), Dasam Granth and other Sikh scriptures; Sikh code of conduct (Sikh Rehat Maryada).

Reference:

Kapur Singh, Parasaraprasna, 1989, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar,  
Sikh Rehat Maryada, Shromani Gurdwara Parbhandhak Committee, Amritsar, India.

### **The Rise of Imperialism and Colonialism**

Chap 5, Grade 10, Lines 815-819, page 298

Draft framework that reads as follows,

Colonizers introduced new infrastructures, medicines, educational systems, and Western beliefs. Print technology and more rapid transportation aided the growth of Protestantism, Catholicism, Islam, Sikhism, and Buddhism. These technological developments also facilitated the transformation of regional Indian religious traditions into a more unified Hinduism.

#### **Comments:**

The British kept the Indian religious situation under control among different religious communities by using a stick and carrot approach. However, the communal partition of India into India and Pakistan left the whole region bleeding (millions were butchered during the partition in 1947) and the scars left behind continue to fester till today. Religious intolerance has been on the rise throughout this Region.

### **Interpreting the Constitution: The Work of the U.S. Supreme Court**

Chapter 5, Grade 12, page 2489-2493, page 373

Draft framework that reads as follows,

*Cheema v. Thompson* (freedom of religion in schools). These cases once again reflect tensions between individual rights and societal interests; they also illustrate how each case involved real people and how the present laws resulted from the debates, trials, and sacrifices of ordinary people. Students learn about the process by which a case reaches the Supreme Court. In examining the evolution of civil rights under the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, students can draw upon their knowledge of the Civil War and the passage of the Reconstruction-era amendments.

#### **Comments:**

We strongly support the inclusion of *Cheema vs. Thompson* in the government class for seniors as this case truly represents the purpose as defined in the recommended framework. This landmark case involved the religious rights of initiated (baptized) Sikhs. The students shall learn how our legal system works to accommodate the rights of citizens to practice the religion of their choice. It shall teach students how our multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-lingual democratic system of government functions and resolves conflicts. This case has been on the books for 20 years.

## Grade Four—California: A Changing State

Chap 3, Grade 4, Page 940-956, page 86-87

Draft framework that reads as follows,

American Indians who lived here before the first Europeans arrived. The history of California then becomes the story of successive waves of immigrants from the sixteenth century through modern times and the enduring marks each left on the character of the state. These immigrants include (1) the Spanish explorers, Indians from northern Mexico, Russians, and the Spanish-Mexican settlers of the Mission and Rancho period, known as "Californios," who introduced European plants, agriculture, and a herding economy to the region; (2) the people from around the world who settled here, established California as a state, and developed its mining, industrial, and agricultural economy; (3) the Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, Sikhs, and other immigrants of the second half of the nineteenth century, who provided a new supply of labor for California's railroads, agriculture, and industry and contributed as entrepreneurs and innovators, especially in agriculture; (4) the immigrants of the first half of the twentieth century, including new arrivals from Latin America and Europe; and (5) the many immigrants arriving today from Latin America, the nations of the Pacific Basin and Europe, and the continued migration of people from other parts of the United States. Because of their early arrival in the New World, people of African descent have been present throughout much of California's history.

### Comments:

We whole heartedly support the above description in item (3) listing various communities who provided labor for building railroads and worked in agriculture and industry. There exists well documented evidence that the said communities indeed did the back breaking work of building railroads and sustaining agriculture. Recognition of the contributions of the immigrant groups to the success of California economy is praiseworthy. Even today, the biggest peach, almond and okra growers in California are Sikhs.

## Modern California: Immigration, Technology, and Cities

Chap 3, Grade 4, lines 1195-1197, page. 97

Draft framework that reads as follows,

They learn about the contributions of immigrants to California and United States history, such as Dalip Singh Saund, a Sikh immigrant who was the first Asian American to serve in the United States Congress.

### Comments:

*associated associated*  
*Dr. Dalip S. Saund was a trail blazer & role model.*  
Prominence of a person is generally signified by various characteristics like ethnicity, nationality, religion, language, sex etc. Dr. Dalip Singh Saund was born to Sikh parents and according to his own book 'Congressman from India' the religious principles and Sikh hymns ~~including~~ were embedded in his mind by his mother from his early childhood. His parents were well versed in Sikh religious traditions. Before he was elected to the US Congress, Dr. Saund served as the secretary of the oldest

(established in 1913) Sikh Gurdwara (temple) located in Stockton. He was instrumental in getting immigration laws changed by the US Congress that facilitated ~~the~~ immigration to the US and allowed them to become US citizens.

References:

Harold S. Jacoby, History of East Indians in America, Amritsar, 2007, 270

D. S. Saund, Congressman from India, Amritsar,

### 1355 The Early Civilizations of India

Chapter 4, grade 6, lines 686-693, page 166

Draft framework that reads as

As in all early civilizations, Indian society witnessed the development of a system of social classes. The main social categories, known as varnas, were priests; warriors; farmers, artisans, and merchants; dependent laborers; and, by 500 CE or earlier, dalits, or "untouchables." This class system became distinctive over the centuries for being especially complex and formal, involving numerous prohibitions that kept groups ritually separated from one another. Because these divisions became particularly rigid, scholars have classified the hierarchy as a caste system.

#### Comments:

**Manu-smriti**, (Sanskrit: "Laws of Manu") traditionally, the most authoritative of the books of the Hindu code (Dharma-shastra) in India. *Manu-smriti* is the popular name of the work, which is officially known as Manava-dharma-shastra. It is attributed to the legendary first man and lawgiver, Manu. In its present form, it dates from the 1st century BCE. The *Manu-smriti* prescribes to the Hindu his dharma—i.e., that set of obligations incumbent on him as a member of one of the four social classes (*varnas*) and engaged in one of the four stages of life (*ashramas*). Four *varna* categories were constructed to organize society along economic and occupational lines. Spiritual leaders and teachers were called Brahmins. Warriors and nobility were called Kshatriyas. Merchants and producers were called Vaishyas. Laborers were called Sudras.

**The Untouchables:** In addition to the *varnas*, there is a fifth class in Hinduism. It encompassed outcasts who, literally, did all the dirty work. They were referred to as "untouchables" because they carried out the miserable tasks associated with disease and pollution, such as cleaning up after funerals, dealing with sewage, and working with animal skin. Brahmins were considered the embodiment of purity, and untouchables the embodiment of pollution. Physical contact between the two groups was absolutely prohibited. Brahmins adhered so strongly to this rule that they felt obliged to bathe if even the shadow of an untouchable fell across them. Bhagvad Gita, an important religious treatise of Hindu religion affirms the significance of Varanashrama Dharma and caste system.